ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in the Itchenor Memorial Hall on Friday 15 April 2016, chaired by the Chairman of the Parish Council.

Present:	Parish Council	Mr G Colbourne Mr J Dunn, Mr C Mead-Briggs, Mr A Spencer Mrs S Taylor, Mrs A Trevelyan, Mr C Watson
	Residents	37 Residents
	Guests	Mr Andrew Tyrie MP, Mr J Smith (Environment Agency) Ms J Reeves (Manhood Wildlife Officer) Mr A Tyler Mr P Montyn (WSCC)

1. Chairman's Introduction.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. He introduced Andrew Tyrie MP. Mr Tyrie has been an MP since 1997 and is currently the Chair of the Treasury Select Committee having first joined it in 2001. Mr Tyrie is a member of the Privy Council and the MCC.

2. Mr Andrew Tyrie MP

Mr Tyrie thanked the Chairman for inviting him to speak and suggested that he would focus on three main aspects, the A27 improvements, court closures and the European Referendum

The A27 is the subject of some controversy particularly on whether to have northern bypass. If there had been money available for a northern bypass, then there would be no money out of the Highways Authority for southern route for a very long time. Would a northern bypass relieve congestion, probably not at peak times. One third of the traffic is local. A significant reason the A27 is congested is due to the north/south traffic, that is people trying to get to work or home from work. This will get worse because of the housing pressure. There is going to have to be more houses on the Peninsula. Three quarters of the District is either AONB or National Park. Mr Tyrie had been fighting to get improvements to junctions. The crucial thing now is to get best possible improvements to the existing route including flyover capacity probably in at least 2 places. He is negotiating with Ministers currently.

The Courts are currently going to be closed and he is constantly trying to lobby Ministers against this. The closures cannot be justified on any grounds. There is no economic rationale for their closure. The proposals are neglectful of the type of people in the area. It will be the only County left without a court in the County town. If arguments can be made that the closures will save money, then he would review. He stressed that the Country was still in need of savings. The utilisation of the Chichester courts is above average in the country. He is so concerned about the proposed closures he is in discussions with a group of lawyers to see if there is any scope for a judicial review.

Europe is a massive issue for both the constituency and country. If the country votes to leave the EU, there might be a lot of adjustment that might be painful in the short term. We might be better off in long term or might be worse off. If we stay and the EU gets into a worse mess it may be the same result. This is the second referendum on the islands recently. If Scotland left the UK it would not be the same. We would always be a diminished nation.

Mr Tyrie suggested having a sense of proportion for it all and to look at the economic costs and benefits. We are outside the most volatile parts of the EU as we are not part of Eurozone. However, we will be affected by the EU whether we stay in or get out of the EU.

Trade aspects are not straight forward. The EU benefits more than we do in a crude way. Should we leave most of the trading remains under globally agreed rules. Trade in the service industry is very sophisticated. It is hard to get international agreement on service trade and we would not gain as much by leaving if at all. On the investment side then we benefit significantly by being part of the EU as a lot of organisations use the UK as a base. The arguments either way are very finely balanced.
There is an argument for saying the intrusion into people's lives is an erosion of our self-respect, our sense of identity is being eroded. Original the EEC enabled Germany to express its identity within a European framework as well getting back its self-respect. It is important for Eastern European countries, being part of EU is an expression of national identity where they had previously been unable to do this. It is a difficult judgement to make. Everyone has to make their own decision. He had argued for some time that the country should decide this from time to time.

Mr Tyrie thanked everyone for listening and invited questions.

Do you think that this decision should have been made by politicians in a professional capacity rather than us who are making decisions based on information in leaflets.
Mr Tyrie agreed in principle but suggested that the precedent was set in 1975 when the Labour government decided that a referendum would decide whether we stayed in or came out of the Common Market. There is a problem with a referendum in that people can be led to vote emotionally on unrelated issues. Some countries have been very successful with their use of referendums. In this case, notwithstanding the technical arguments he felt it was important for the people to have their say.

The remain campaign does not appear to have a vision on why we should stay in the EU other than it is bad idea to leave. Could there be proper arguments as to why it is a good idea that we should stay or why it is a good idea we should leave.
One of the key points has been that we have had to intervene in the continent and get involved with what's happening over a large number of years. A good part of the remain argument is based on what is in the national interest. If we were to leave it might trigger a good deal of uncertainty, which could result in a number events that wouldn't be in our interest.

The current US government is keen for us to remain, who would we like to see as the next US President.
George Bush Junior was seen as one of the worst presidents in USA history, leaving behind a lot of rubble. Mr Obama has done some of the clearing up and brought back a sense of integrity and respectability. Previous candidates such as Obama, Clinton McCain were all very serious and knowledgeable politicians. This time round Hilary Clinton, there is a lack of sincerity in her public persona. Donald Trump makes him nervous. When Ronald Regan first started everyone thought he would be a disaster but he turned out to be a fine president. He hoped there was more to Mr Trump than meets the eye.

Are you concerned about the state of some of the country's banks.
I don't think anyone feels they are getting a good service from their bank which is probably true. There is a need for competition. The banks use your money and therefore you are effectively paying for it. Customer need to know how much they are being charged. At the moment people are nervous about changing banks for fear of loss of personal information so a change might be a risk. Mr Tyrie expressed concern that only modest progress has been made. Balance sheets are better than they were, if there was a big crash would we let banks go bust – who knows. Have banks learned lesson, up to a point but they could easily slip back to their old ways.

There is an ongoing debate on the coastline and how it should be protected etc. How do you see this.
Mr Tyrie was not convinced of the arguments on managed retreat which is based on sea level rises that he thought unlikely. Every time the world experts look at this the figures are lower than previously forecast. Managed retreat sounds civilised but landowners have to be told have to let it go. Locally here they have done a good job. Defences look to be working well. An area like this can largely look after self if allowed to do so.

The A27 is a huge frustration we should do something. The only people who benefit the consultation are the consultants. Nothing has happened for too long. It was thought that Lord Adonis would tell the Highways Agency to just get on with it.
It is an extraordinary situation that people simply can't get to work on time. Highways England gives information on journey times but this is of no use to people using the routes. The only way to deal with issues is a system that keeps traffic flowing.

With problems on A27 there should be no more development on the Peninsula until this is sorted out. It is a rational argument but you can't expect policy to proceed on this basis. When I talk to people about housing, road congestion and pressure on infrastructure is one problem. Appearance is another, if building houses in dense format and out of keeping with neighbourhood then you get resistance. A planning system that favours larger developments is also a major source of resistance.
Villages will benefit if there is some modest development to allow shops schools etc. to survive. Lack of imagination on developments exacerbates resistance that already exists.

Is Government concerned about what's happened over past 40 years that is a greater increase of Islam and Muslims in the western world.
More people get murdered every week month than as a consequence of terrorism.
Is it causing tensions between communities that's difficult to say. Mr Tyrie has never opposed all immigration and has always been supportive of the view, not how many but who. Are we getting people who want to integrate into our society. He was attracted to idea of multicultural society when younger but has become more convinced that integration necessary. With regard Islam in Britain, if people want to integrate it will work in the long run, if they want to be separate then that will have problems.
Working at time when the Soviet Union was a severe threat. The Cold War generated very a dangerous environment. Is it safer now or then? It may have looked like a safe and certain world but it was not.

Mr Tyrie concluded by saying that there was never a better time to be alive than today and generally the world is a better place. To make world better place we need to hang on to drivers that make world better than imagined.

The Chairman thanked Mr Tyrie for his time.

3. John Smith – Environment Agency

The Chairman introduced John Smith, Team Leader, Asset Performance Team for East Hampshire and Chichester

The flood risks in Itchenor are not great but that is not much consolation for anyone who has been flooded. Mr Smith highlighted the risks as fluvial (river) flooding, burst water mains, sewer flooding and issues with groundwater.
There are issues in Itchenor with groundwater is it flows from the downs towards the sea. Groundwater issues are now the responsibility of the WSCC. Sometimes when flooding occurs it can be difficult to understand the cause. Flooding can often be a combination of

effects, such as excessive rainfall, high tides making it difficult for any water to escape to the sea.

Mr Smith highlighted the Environment Agency (EA) role in Itchenor. The EA has powers to work on main rivers and to ensure that riparian owners maintain them. If there is a general need within a community and something needs to be done quickly then the EA can take action.
There is a good field team in Sussex who do work as much as possible. Internal Drainage Boards (IDB) have been set up where drainage is difficult such as the peninsula. DEFRA have decided that the EA is not allowed to operate the IDB and it is no longer legal for them to do so. The local IDB is being dissolved at end of this financial year and the budget of £180,000 will cease. The onus will fall back on riparian owners to keep looking after the watercourse. WSCC will take over powers or pass over the monitoring to CDC.

Itchenor shares a flood warning notification with Bosham, although Bosham is more of a risk than Itchenor. The EA produce flood maps for coastal flooding and main rivers. It is easier to map tidal flooding, harder for rivers as they have to estimate how much water coming down from the hills. A lot of time is spent refining these maps.
This winter most of Sussex team were in Cumbria then they were sent to Yorkshire over Christmas.

Mr Smith showed 1 in 200-year flood maps for Itchenor. It means there is a 0.5% chance of flooding in any year. In 2012 the flooding was a 1 in 160-year event for West Sussex. Around 250 properties on the Peninsula were badly affected. Mr Smith was asked if the maps were available online and could Insurance Companies also access the maps. The response was that yes similar maps were available online and that some insurance companies do produce their own maps.

Tidal flooding, extreme current day water levels indicate there is a 1:50 year protection for Itchenor. This could mean that flooding happens twice in one year or it may not happen for 100 years. It is unpredictable. Flood warnings are issued when the sea reaches 2.65m above ordnance datum. The current sea defences are 3.3m above Ordnance Datum. The 1:1-year water level is predicted on spring tides with prevailing winds. It is possible to reduce flood risk but cannot eliminate it completely. The sea wall is inspected every 12 months. It is not owned by the EA or government but the EA carries out odd bits of maintenance when possible. Outfall work was done about 3 years ago.

Ordinary watercourses are the responsibility of people whose land they cross. It is important to understand that when you do work this could impact on people further down the watercourse. Before you do any work people should contact the EA or WSCC and establish if consent is needed for any work to be done.

Shoreline management plans have no money and no projects are earmarked in this area. There are no plans to make the sea wall higher. Many defences privately owned so no funding available. There is currently no strategy for this part of the coastline. One is being produced by CDC and Conservancy but it is not there yet.

Many people are grouping together to do things for themselves. For example, in Emsworth a group of the most vulnerable properties built a bund on the seaward side, a lot of the Sussex EA team gave up times as volunteers to help. They have also built a wall at the front of their properties and they are gradually dealing with issues and applying for grants to help with the costs.

Mr Smith also highlighted the National Flood Forum as a good source of advice.

Mr Smith then answered questions from the floor.
Do you have anything to do with the water boards. Lorries are frequently used to get rid of sewage as the drainage is not good.
Southern Water has been proactive in doing sewer sealing but that was some time ago. With sewers here leaking again and up to the River Lavant they need to decide what to do, either replace system or keep repairing leaks. It happens when water gets into the system or where people have drained gardens into the sewer system.

Did you take measurements on Easter Sunday night when storm Katie came through?
The wind more than the water level a problem. On the sea defences at Farlington it was found there was a boat on top of sea defences.

Is the River Lavant classified as a main River?
Yes, it is.

The Chairman thanked Mr Smith for his presentation.

4. Parish Council reports

Cllr Dunn advised that those who register for the EA warnings do get information either by phone or by text.
Cllr Dunn explained that a working party was set up by the Parish Council to look in more depth at the issues affecting surface water and ditches, the trees around the pond, the common and the underground drains. All of which have caused problems.
A great deal of information has been lost over the years but good progress has been made by the working party. Now the group is drawing together all the information and understands how these issues are interrelated.

Much of the information has been transposed to a map (shown).
The surface water network in the peninsula relies entirely on man-made ditches draining to the sea at steady speed. When there is a storm they need to behave differently. These historic ditches have been seriously disrupted by being filled with small pipes and buried or just allowed to silt up and become overgrown. The outflows (rife) have in the case of Itchenor been barred by a sea wall that only allows water to exit about 2 hours each side of low water twice in 24 hours. In Shipton Green the outflow is in a different direction towards the rife at Rookwood. The Itchenor sea wall has allowed land to be reclaimed for housing and marsh habitat, but only offers protection from flooding when ground water remains lower than low tide or when the high tide does not cover the top of the wall. Neither of these things can be assured.

The foul drainage network runs below the the flood areas so will always be carrying sea or surface water and be filled by storms. There have been years of change in Itchenor without addressing these problems. With the changes in weather that we are now seeing urgent actions are required to reduce flood risk. We are therefore giving this highest priority, and not just us. A West manhood Flood Prevention group has now been formed in order to fit with new structures created by Government and give our community a stronger voice as well as applying for funding.

The founder members of the group cross parish boundaries, aiming to work together to provide a framework for improvements, to liaise with residents, plan and manage the work. We are dependent on community help, also using contractors for the bigger tasks. This will affect everyone who lives here and it is essential that we all play our part so that neighbours are not put at a higher risk than they need be. Even the highest areas are vulnerable to flooding here.

Of course the special nature of our AONB means that we must act with care. We have Jane Reeve and Chris Watson both specialists. Anyone interested in helping is asked to give their name and contact details. Shortly we will be writing to landowners with specifics of how they can help and how we can help them. It is hoped that residents will support this endeavour.

5. Residents Questions.

The Chairman invited questions from residents.

What is happening about the BT box recently installed on the Common?
At the moment nothing as it doesn't need planning permission although it is 20cm further away from the road than it should be. The costs are around £30/35,000 to move it. It will provide faster broadband for residents when it is connected to the BT network.

What is happening with the filled in ditch just by barns.
This is a tricky situation it may be necessary to dig up the footpath and road. There is an issues with a pipe that has been filled in. Over the last 6 months the two organisations that have been the least helpful were Southern water and Highways. Both very easy to talk to but they have no budgets so happy to talk but with very little action. This is one of the reasons for the flood protection group we have to accept that we have to deal with this ourselves. Residents may have to do some work here. The culvert under road not operating well, Highways refusing to deal with this. The flood prevention group is now going to deal with this directly and funding will be sought to pay for the work.

Could we put minutes or the map on website so we can keep abreast of progress.
Much of this has been in the Parish Council minutes. In due course information from the group will also be available on the website.

The Chairman highlighted the need for residents to sign up for updates from the Parish Council.

All of the work will come from external funding, the Parish Council will seek funding from every source possible. Previously the Parish Council did a survey of every gully drains and sent this to WSCC nothing has happened since.

All for self-help approach if funding needed then perhaps residents can help. The Parish Council was urged to get on with the work as the damage is far more worrying.
With the Flood Prevention Group as the scale of the work becomes clearer it will break up into plan of work areas with the intention to ask for volunteers to help with specific parts of the work such as clearing tress and vegetation. We will be asking for private funding as well as Operation Watershed funding everyone will have something to do.

The Chairman reported that the current Parish Council started in May last year. All councillors have done a great deal of work. We have had an interesting planning application to deal with. He applauded the work of the planning committee as well as Alex Webb (Chair of the Itchenor Society) who gave a very good speech at the District Council planning meeting which helped defeat the application. Thanks were also expressed to villagers for their helpful comments too.

The Chairman thanked everyone to taking the trouble to attend the meeting and invited everyone to partake of the refreshments offered.

The meeting closed at 8.04 pm

Signed :…….. Dated:…….
Chairman, West Itchenor Parish Council